

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel all claims (except amended Claim 1) without prejudice; and please further amend the amended Claim 1 as filed: 9/16/06 as follows:

1. (currently Amended) A multiple-fold umbrella shaft comprising:
a plurality of hollow cylindrical tubes gradually increasing tube diameter from an innermost tube to an outermost tube, and telescopically engageable with one another about a longitudinal axis of a central shaft; each said tube having a plurality of reinforcing ribs longitudinally formed, evenly distributed and radially recessed inwardly in a cylindrical tubular surface of each said tube, with any two neighboring reinforcing ribs defining an equal central angle about the longitudinal axis of the central shaft; whereby upon assembling of the plurality of said tubes to form a multiple-fold umbrella shaft, an inner tube has a plurality of said reinforcing ribs slidably engaged with a plurality of said reinforcing ribs of an outer tube disposed around said inner tube for preventing from twisting or vibration of the tubes of the central shaft;
said reinforcing ribs of said tubes having centers of the a plurality of curvature radii of said reinforcing ribs radially aligned to be a radial line which is radially aligned with a longitudinal axis of the central shaft; said longitudinal axis longitudinally aligned with all centers of the tubes; and
the improvement which comprises:
said inner tube and said outer tube defining a tiny annular

aperture homogeneously in between the two neighboring tubes having the each said reinforcing ribs rib of the inner tube slidably engaged with the each said reinforcing ribs rib of the outer tube to prevent from frictional contacting between the two neighboring tubes to enhance a smooth sliding movement of the tubes when folding or unfolding the tubes for closing or opening the umbrella.

2. ~ 12. (canceled)